DEDICATION

These Guidelines are Dedicated to
the Prevention of Injuries and Death
of Law Enforcement Officers
Who Put Their Lives On the Line
Every Day

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Foreword

Modern law enforcement executives, of necessity, are continually confronted with changing management and operational methods. The organizational transitions discussed in John Naisbitt's third and final book, Power Shift have not bypassed the criminal justice sector of our society. The shift from a national economy to a world economy has its parallel in a shift from our traditional approach to crime and disorder as a purely local problem, to a recognition of crime as a national and even a world problem. The "war on drugs" is a clear example. In his final book, Mr. Naisbitt talks of a shift from hierarchies to networking and collaboration. The rapid acceptance of the Internet and the World Wide Web is a manifestation of this trend. This present work serves as an example of the recognition of both trends by the International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement Standards and Training and the National Highway Traffic Administration.

As recently as 25 years ago, fewer than 20 states had established standards for the employment, training, and retention of law enforcement and criminal justice officers. Today all 50 states have enacted legislation or have, by means of executive order, created such commissions, boards, or councils whose primary purpose is to develop and foster continuity and standardization within each state. IADLEST extends this trend to the 50 states and internationally.

During a meeting of the International Association of Directors of Standards and Training held in July, 1986, in South Carolina, the idea of cooperating in the first-ever effort to identify and establish uniform guidelines for a basic law enforcement driver training process was unanimously endorsed. IADLEST also determined that the guidelines to be developed should be flexible enough to allow for the inclusion of state and local needs and mandates. The pages that follow are the result of the second such effort and demonstrates not only the feasibility of arriving at a commonly accepted standards and training curriculum for emergency vehicle operation, but perhaps more importantly, the real ability of the several states, effectively networking on a national basis, to discover common answers to vital training questions.

The initial publication of this Guide in 1989 and its republication in the form of this **Second Edition** demonstrates conclusively that the states can work together and agree on strategies for dealing with critical law enforcement problems and issues. The role of the U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), especially Mr. Brian Traynor, in enabling this achievement is gratefully acknowledged.

G. Kelly Michelson, President
International Association of Directors
of Law Enforcement Standards and Training

Preface

Law enforcement in America has come to realize that the cooperation of the public is an essential ingredient in meaningful and effective efforts to reduce crime and to improve public safety. Exciting new programs in community policing, problem-oriented policing, and other innovations have shown the value of community confidence in their law enforcement agencies. Enhanced community confidence leads to better financial support, better cooperation during enforcement activities, and a better sense of well-being for citizens, and most importantly, reduced levels of crime.

Community confidence extends to officer competence, as well. As community members come to know "their" officers better, they also develop a fairly good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their officers. One of the most visible and publicized activities of the police is driving, especially emergency vehicle operation and pursuits. It is important to provide a message to the public that their officers are as competent and well-managed in this critical activity as they are in the more traditional areas of firearms, arrest procedures, etc.

Professional law enforcement leaders now realize that driving is certainly as dangerous as, and probably more dangerous than the use of firearms and control tactics. While data is presently not available, informed law enforcement leaders will admit that about one-fourth to one-third of officer fatalities occur in motor-vehicle crashes. The cost of law enforcement crashes is high indeed, not only in property loss, but in fatalities and injuries.

I know only too well the high cost of the lack of training. While driving home one evening, my first wife and 2-year old daughter were killed and my 4-year old daughter was critically injured after being struck broadside by a patrol unit that ran a stop sign at 100 mph while pursing a speeding motorcycle in a residential neighborhood. They became innocent victims of a law enforcement pursuit involving a law enforcement officer who had not been trained in law enforcement driving.

It is reasonable to expect officers to receive as much training with emergency vehicle and pursuit driving as they do with the use of issued firearms and other weapons. While this seems logical, with few exceptions it rarely occurs. Often we hear opposition to additional police driver training, noting that it is too expensive, unnecessary, the facilities do not exist, etc. Veteran police officers have experienced first-hand the cost associated with vehicle crashes, including those involving fellow officers. Good and recurrent training is necessary. Good training is not too costly. Most professionals in risk management would argue that it is too costly *not* to provide good and periodic vehicle training!

This Guide points out that good training can be provided in small areas, it can be tailored to existing facilities and conditions, and it must compliment established departmental policy. It is not necessary to invest in expensive high-speed tracks in order to provide useful and effective training. While such tracks are a wonderful resource, there are simply not enough of them to provide the frequency of training required. We must provide training, then, in the types of facilities commonly available, i.e., parking lots, airports, wide roadways, etc.

This Guide can be used by all sizes and types of law enforcement agencies to develop meaningful and effective driver training for all employees. I want to urge all law enforcement leaders, trainers, and educators for both personal and professional reasons to review this Guide for its use in your department or agencies you serve.

Sheriff John Whetsel
Oklahoma County Sheriff's Office, Oklahoma City, OK
Past President, International Association of Chiefs of Police

About the Guide

The knowledge, skills, and attitudes that the average student brings to a basic recruit training academy are not sufficient for operating a law enforcement vehicle. The type of vehicle driven by civilians and law enforcement officers is similar, but the actual driving task is different. This becomes very obvious when comparing the collision rate for the general population with that of law enforcement officers, which is no less than twice as great.

The rapid increase in the number of civil suits and the large monetary awards related to driving incidents are a primary concern of law enforcement agencies and those who insure them. Adverse court decisions are the result of many factors: the adequacy of the collision investigation, the competence of attorneys, the relationship between police and the community, the level of competence of the law enforcement officer as a driver, etc. The competence of a law enforcement officer's training as a driver is the focus of this Guide.

The competence of a law enforcement officer as a driver has been challenged on the basis of documented factors. Either no training was provided, or the training was inadequate in some way: the training for the physical performance of a task was restricted to classroom lectures, the training did not address the causes of the collision at hand, and so forth. In defense, training administrators, at times, have been unable to provide documentation to establish the validity of the driver training provided, nor could they show common training standards across similar agencies to give face validity to the training. Instructors called to testify have sometimes not been able to justify the training on a rational basis.

These factors prompted the formation of a committee of members of the International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement Standards and Training to address these issues first in 1986 and then again in 1994. IADLEST applied to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and entered into a Cooperative Agreement #DTNH22-93-Z-05245 to fund the project to update and modernize the Guide from its 1989 publication.

IADLEST members have once again committed staff time, money, and administrative resources to the project to write a Second Edition of the "Guide." The review committee was made up of a geographic representation of the Association membership, as well as "veterans" of the original Guide project to include representation from NHTSA.

The exact cause for the high rate of law enforcement vehicle collisions can not be precisely stated because many law enforcement agencies do not keep meaningful records. Those agencies that do keep records do not use a standardized format that allows compilation of statistics on a national basis to identify common causes of collisions, or to make comparisons between similar agencies. Without a valid statistical base to identify the cause of collisions it has been necessary for committee members to construct these guidelines and compare them to existing driving programs.

Collision reduction is not tied solely to the quality of driver training. A good recruit selection process will eliminate applicants who are poor driving risks. Management plays a key role in reducing collisions by providing well-considered, enforceable policies. These would include driving, on-the-street supervision, vehicle maintenance, fair and impartial investigation of accidents, and the taking of corrective and disciplinary actions. Therefore, it has not been possible for the committee to identify which existing driving courses were most cost-effective because so many agencies possess unique characteristics.

The primary goals and objectives of the revision committee were to review the Guide as published in 1989 and updated in 1991 and to enhance the Guide to reflect contemporary concerns in law enforcement driver training, especially new technology and pursuits. The second edition of the Guide has taken the form of a generic curriculum with learning objectives, an evaluation system, and an instructor qualification process. The information in this Guide is presented in the form of concepts along with guidelines and suggestions for implementation. This information is intended to be a model for a driver training process, not a series of standards or mandates, but a guide. Individual agencies are responsible for reviewing their specific needs and evaluating their current driver training process in light of the information and guidelines offered in this task force report.

The rationale for the Guide being in the form of generic information and guidelines with directions for use is that there are enough differences among states and agencies to prohibit making specific recommendations. Some of these differences include:

- Laws governing emergencies and the use of sirens and lights differ among the states.
- Agency policies on emergencies and pursuits differ to reflect local needs and concerns.
- The number of instructional hours required to produce the same level of competency can vary due to instructional strategies, instructor qualifications, instructor-trainee ratio, training physical plant, qualifications of students, and other factors.
- There are no statistics that conclusively identify common causes of law enforcement vehicle collisions. Consequently, we do not know if all states are the same. Therefore, adequate training for one state may not be adequate for another.

This Guide identifies knowledge, skills, and abilities required for law enforcement driving but does not mandate what level of proficiency should be attained. It does not advocate particular teaching strategies to maximize retention or to be the most efficient. What appears in this report is not a description of any existing training process. It is the product of numerous contributions. Each state or local agency has the responsibility for assessing its training situation and determining what should be adopted from this report to meet its needs. Justification for including or excluding any of the information, suggestions, or examples into a state or local course is the responsibility of that agency.

Ray Beach, Co-Chairman
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Goals and Philosophy Statement

The initial 1986 Task Force on Law Enforcement Driver Training, as well as the subsequent Committee to update the Guide, have been formed in response to a perceived need for consistency and continuity in law enforcement driver training. The revision committee, as well as the Task Force before it, is guided by the law enforcement profession's commitment to:

1. Improving both public and officer safety, and

2. Reducing real and potential liability threats against individual agencies and personnel.

These goals are to be achieved through the development of a model driver training curriculum that:

- addresses vehicle operation in the performance of the law enforcement function
- will reduce police vehicle crashes and resultant injuries and costs;
- is legally defensible (i.e., job-related, subject to validation);
- is sensitive to a broad spectrum of agencies or concerns;
- is feasible and cost effective;
- can withstand the test of time;

DISCLAIMER This document is disseminated under the sponsorship of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in the interest of information exchange. It is the responsibility of each agency to determine the applicability and correctness of these guidelines for their circumstances. Neither the United States Government, IADLEST, or members of the revision committee assumes liability for its contents or use thereof.

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